

# Nebraska Democrats

985 So. 27th Street ★ Lincoln, Nebraska 68510  
(402) 434-2180 ★ 800-742-0025 ★ FAX (402) 434-2188  
Web Address: <http://www.nebr-democrats.org>  
e-mail: [nebrdems@inetnebr.com](mailto:nebrdems@inetnebr.com)

October 21, 1998

MUP 4836

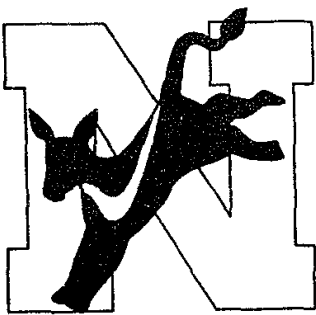
Retha Dixon  
Federal Election Commission  
999 E St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20463

Dear Ms. Dixon:

As requested in your letter of October 15, 1998, we have addressed the defect in the complaint letter filed with the Federal Election Commission on October 7, 1998. Please note that supporting documentation for our complaint was included with our first letter. If you have additional questions, please feel free to call the Nebraska Democratic Party at 402-434-2180.

Sincerely,

Anne Boyle, State Chair  
Nebraska Democratic Party



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Oct. 21, 1998

Office of General Counsel  
999 E St. NW  
Federal Election Commission  
Washington D.C. 20463

Dear Office of General Counsel:

The Nebraska Democratic Party wishes to submit a formal complaint with the Federal Election Commission. We are alleging possible violations of federal election campaign laws by Nebraska Attorney General Don Stenberg during his bid for the U.S. Senate in 1995. We are requesting an FEC investigation to determine whether Attorney General Stenberg or his contributors violated any federal laws.

This complaint raises questions about the nature of Attorney General Stenberg's ties to Thousand Adventures, Inc., a Nebraska-based campground company, and the legality of \$9,400 in federal campaign contributions from the company's owner, the owner's relatives and the company's employees to Stenberg's Senate campaign. The complaint seeks an answer to the following question:

- **Did money laundering occur in an attempt to circumvent individual campaign contribution limits, including the laundering of funds through the accounts of a 12-year-old boy and three company employees?**

This complaint is being filed because of concerns that Attorney General Stenberg may have a conflict of interest with Thousand Adventures for not pursuing an obvious case of fraud. Did Thousand Adventures in effect buy off Stenberg and buy its immunity from a lawsuit with campaign contributions?

## **BACKGROUND ON THOUSAND ADVENTURES**

Stenberg's close association with Thousand Adventures, Inc. was exposed by the Omaha World-Herald in a Sept. 7, 1998 investigative report (See Attachment A). The former campground company, based in Blair, Nebraska, filed bankruptcy in 1997. About 70,000 members paid \$6,000 each for access to the company's 58 campgrounds across the country. Those campers are now left with 20 campgrounds under the management of a different company with no assurance that these facilities will continue to stay open.

In all, 21 states filed consumer fraud lawsuits or took some form of legal action against Thousand Adventures to prevent the company from selling memberships. The company failed to maintain or keep campgrounds open, made false and deceptive statements about



the value of memberships and consumers' ability to obtain refunds or sell their memberships; promoted campground facilities that did not exist; engaged in illegal debt collection practices; and changed terms in contracts by imposing additional and unexpected charges to members. (See Attachments B and C).

While several states sought to protect their citizens by filing lawsuits against Thousand Adventures, Nebraska Attorney General Don Stenberg opted against the fraud suit in the company's home state despite more than 300 consumer complaints filed with his office. As Doug Napier, the attorney for a class-action suit on behalf of Thousand Adventures' 70,000 members pointed out in the World-Herald, "If the Nebraska Attorney General's Office had investigated and closed down the Nebraska home office, it would have had the ripple effect of providing protection to people throughout the United States." (See Attachment A).

### **FEDERAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS TO DON STENBERG**

David Vopnford, the owner and CEO of Thousand Adventures, six of Vopnford's family members and three employees donated a total of \$9,400 to Stenberg's U.S. Senate campaign in 1995. Five contributions of \$1,000 each and one \$500 contribution were made on June 28, 1995 in the names of three employees, Vopnford's 12-year-old son, Leif Vopnford and two other family members. (See Attachment D). We believe these contributions are suspect for the following reasons:

- Federal law allows minors to make contributions as long as they understand what they are doing and as long as the money was not given to them for that purpose. Was the money given to 12-year-old Leif Vopnford for that purpose and did he fully understand the nature of his action?
- Did the three employees voluntarily make campaign contributions with their own personal funds or was the money laundered through their separate checking accounts to get around the federal contribution limits of \$1,000 per individual?
- The timing of the contributions is intriguing. In addition to the three employees, three family members, including the 12-year-old boy, made their contributions on the same date, June 28, 1995. Was this sheer coincidence or were these contributions arranged by David Vopnford and Thousand Adventures?

Thank you very much for giving this matter your serious attention. We will be looking forward to your response, and in the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or the Nebraska Democratic Party office at 402-434-2180.

Sincerely,

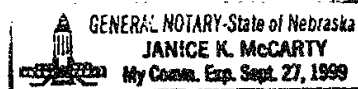
*Anne Boyle*

Anne Boyle, State Chair  
Nebraska Democratic Party

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this <sup>22nd</sup> ~~21st~~ day  
of October 1998.

*Janice K. McCarty*

Enclosures



## REPORT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

For An Authorized Committee  
(Summary Page)

FILED

JAN 31 1996

USE FEC MAILING LABEL

OR  
TYPE OR PRINT

1. NAME OF COMMITTEE (in full) Don Stenberg for U.S. Senate		By SECRETARY OF STATE
ADDRESS (number and street) <input type="checkbox"/> Check if different than previously reported P.O. Box 80547		
CITY, STATE and ZIP CODE Lincoln, NE 68501-0547	STATE/DISTRICT Nebraska	
2. FEC IDENTIFICATION NUMBER C00301549		3. IS THIS REPORT AN AMENDMENT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO

## 4. TYPE OF REPORT

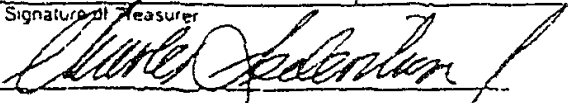
<input type="checkbox"/> April 15 Quarterly Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Twelfth day report preceding _____ (Type of Election)
<input type="checkbox"/> July 15 Quarterly Report	election on _____ in the State of _____
<input type="checkbox"/> October 15 Quarterly Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Thirtieth day report following the General Election on _____ in the State of _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> January 31 Year End Report	
<input type="checkbox"/> July 31 Mid-Year Report (Non-election Year Only)	<input type="checkbox"/> Termination Report

This report contains activity for ☒ Primary Election ☐ General Election ☐ Special Election ☐ Runoff Election

## SUMMARY

5. Covering Period	COLUMN A This Period	COLUMN B Calendar Year-to-Date
7/1/95 through 12/31/95		
6. Net Contributions (other than loans)		
(a) Total Contributions (other than loans) (from Line 11(a))	\$ 117,355.41	\$ 166,090.60
(b) Total Contribution Refunds (from Line 20(d))	-0-	\$ 500.00
(c) Net Contributions (other than loans) (subtract Line 6(b) from 6(a))	\$ 117,355.41	\$ 165,590.60
7. Net Operating Expenditures		
(a) Total Operating Expenditures (from Line 17)	\$ 132,860.32	\$ 152,307.92
(b) Total Offsets to Operating Expenditures (from Line 14)	-0-	-0-
(c) Net Operating Expenditures (subtract Line 7(b) from 7(a))	\$ 132,860.32	\$ 152,307.92
8. Cash on Hand at Close of Reporting Period (from Line 27)	\$ 18,182.68	For further information contact: Federal Election Commission 999 E Street, NW Washington, DC 20463 Toll Free 800-424-9530 Local 202-219-3420
9. Debts and Obligations Owed TO the Committee (Itemize all on Schedule C and/or Schedule D)	-0-	
10. Debts and Obligations Owed BY the Committee (Itemize all on Schedule C and/or Schedule D)	\$ 18,558.50	

I certify that I have examined this Report and to the best of my knowledge and belief it is true, correct and complete.

Type or Print Name of Treasurer Charles Sederstrom, Jr.	Date 1/31/95
Signature of Treasurer 	

NOTE: Submission of false, erroneous, or incomplete information may subject the person signing this Report to the penalties of 2 U.S.C. §437g.

FEC FORM 3  
(revised 4/87)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

PAGE 19 of 40  
FOR LINE #:11(a)(i)

Any information copied from such Reports and Statements may not be sold or used for the purpose of soliciting contributions or for commercial purposes, other than using the name and address of any political committee to solicit contributions from such committee.

NAME OF COMMITTEE (In Full)

DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

Full Name, Mailing Add. & ZIP:	Name of Employer:	Date:	Amount:
Rex Ekwall 8400 "I" Street Omaha NE 68127	Riteway Oil and Gas, Occupation: President	09-08-95 12-01-95	100.00 300.00

Receipt For: X Primary General  
Other (specify):

Aggregate YTD>400.00

Full Name, Mailing Add. & ZIP:	Name of Employer:	Date:	Amount:
Terri Vopnford Route 2, Box LL 144 Blair NE 68008	Homemaker Occupation:	09-15-95	900.00

Receipt For: X Primary General  
Other (specify):

Aggregate YTD>900.00

Full Name, Mailing Add. & ZIP:	Name of Employer:	Date:	Amount:
Bill Marshall 2015 North Broadwell Grand Island NE 68802	Information Requested Occupation:	09-11-95	500.00

Receipt For: X Primary General  
Other (specify):

Aggregate YTD>500.00

Full Name, Mailing Add. & ZIP:	Name of Employer:	Date:	Amount:
William Grewcock 2123 Mullen Road Omaha NE 68124	Kiewit Construction Occupation: Executive	09-11-95	1000.00

Receipt For: X Primary General  
Other (specify):

Aggregate YTD>1000.00

SUBTOTAL of Receipts This Page (optional)----->

# REPORT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

For An Authorized Committee  
(Summary Page)

**RECEIVED**  
MAY 31 1995

SECRETARY OF STATE

1. NAME OF COMMITTEE (In full)

DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

ADDRESS (number and street) ☐ Check if different than previously reported.

P.O. BOX 80547

CITY, STATE and ZIP CODE

STATE/DISTRICT

LINCOLN

NE

68501

NE

2. FEED IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

000301549

3. IS THIS REPORT AN AMENDMENT?

☐ YES

☒ NO

## 4. TYPE OF REPORT

☐ April 15 Quarterly Report

☐ Twelfth day report preceding

(Type of Election)

☐ July 15 Quarterly Report

election on \_\_\_\_\_ in the State of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ October 15 Quarterly Report

☐ Thirtieth day report following the General Election on

JUL 31 1995

☐ January 31 Year End Report

in the State of \_\_\_\_\_

☒ July 31 Mid-Year Report (Non-election Year Only)

☐ Termination Report

SECRETARY OF STATE

This report contains activity for

☒ Primary Election

☐ General Election

☐ Special Election

☐ Runoff Election

## SUMMARY

6. Covering Period	COLUMN A This Period	COLUMN B Calendar Year-to-Date
1/1/95 through 6/30/95		
6. Net Contributions (other than loans)		
(a) Total Contributions (other than loans) (from Line 11(a))	\$48,735.19	\$48,735.19
(b) Total Contribution Refunds (from Line 20(d))	500.00	500.00
(c) Net Contributions (other than loans) (subtract Line 6(b) from 6(a))	48,235.19	48,235.19
7. Net Operating Expenditures		
(a) Total Operating Expenditures (from Line 17)	19,447.60	19,447.60
(b) Total Offsets to Operating Expenditures (from Line 14)	-0-	-0-
(c) Net Operating Expenditures (subtract Line 7(b) from 7(a))	19,447.60	19,447.60
8. Cash on Hand at Close of Reporting Period (from Line 27)	33,787.59	
9. Debt and Obligations Owed TO the Committee (Itemize all on Schedule C and/or Schedule D)	-0-	
10. Debt and Obligations Owed BY the Committee (Itemize all on Schedule C and/or Schedule D)	5,000.00	

For further information contact:  
Federal Election Commission  
999 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20463  
Toll Free 800-424-9530  
Local 202-219-3420

I certify that I have examined this Report and to the best of my knowledge and belief it is true, correct and complete.

Type or Print Name of Treasurer

Charles V. Sederstrom, Jr.

Signature of Treasurer

Date

7/28/95

NOTE: Submission of false, erroneous, or incomplete information may subject the person signing this Report to the penalties of 2 U.S.C. §437g.

FEC FORM 3  
(revised 4/87)

# DETAILED SUMMARY PAGE

of Receipts and Disbursements

(Page 2, FEC FORM 3)

Name of Committee (in full) <b>DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE</b>		Report Covering the Period: From: <b>1/1/95</b> To: <b>6/30/95</b>	
<b>I. RECEIPTS</b>		<b>COLUMN A</b> Total This Period	<b>COLUMN B</b> Calendar Year-To-Date
11. CONTRIBUTIONS (other than loans) FROM:			
(a) Individuals/Persons Other Than Political Committees			
(i) Itemized (use Schedule A) .....		\$ 35,242.75	
(ii) Unitemized .....		9,940.00	
(iii) Total of contributions from individuals .....		45,182.75	
(b) Political Party Committees .....		-0-	-0-
(c) Other Political Committees (such as PACs) .....		2,000.00	2,000.00
(d) The Candidate .....		1,552.44	1,552.44
(e) TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS (other than loans) (add 11(a)(iii), (b), (c) and (d)) .....		48,735.19	48,735.19
12. TRANSFERS FROM OTHER AUTHORIZED COMMITTEES .....		---	---
13. LOANS:			
(a) Made or Guaranteed by the Candidate .....		5,000.00	5,000.00
(b) All Other Loans .....		-0-	-0-
(c) TOTAL LOANS (add 13(a) and (b)) .....		5,000.00	5,000.00
14. OFFSETS TO OPERATING EXPENDITURES (Refunds, Rebates, etc.) .....		-0-	-0-
15. OTHER RECEIPTS (Dividends, Interest, etc.) .....		-0-	-0-
16. TOTAL RECEIPTS (add 11(e), 12, 13(c), 14 and 15) .....		53,735.19	53,735.19
<b>II. DISBURSEMENTS</b>			
17. OPERATING EXPENDITURES .....		19,447.60	19,447.60
18. TRANSFERS TO OTHER AUTHORIZED COMMITTEES .....		-0-	-0-
19. LOAN REPAYMENTS:			
(a) Of Loans Made or Guaranteed by the Candidate .....		-0-	-0-
(b) Of All Other Loans .....		-0-	-0-
(c) TOTAL LOAN REPAYMENTS (add 19(a) and (b)) .....		-0-	-0-
20. REFUNDS OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO:			
(a) Individuals/Persons Other Than Political Committees .....		500.00	500.00
(b) Political Party Committees .....		-0-	-0-
(c) Other Political Committees (such as PACs) .....		-0-	-0-
(d) TOTAL CONTRIBUTION REFUNDS (add 20(a), (b) and (c)) .....		500.00	500.00
21. OTHER DISBURSEMENTS .....		-0-	-0-
22. TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS (add 17, 18, 19(c), 20(d) and 21) .....		\$19,947.60	19,947.60

## III. CASH SUMMARY

23. CASH ON HAND AT BEGINNING OF REPORTING PERIOD .....	\$	-0-	23
24. TOTAL RECEIPTS THIS PERIOD (from Line 16) .....	\$	53,735.19	24
25. SUBTOTAL (add Line 23 and Line 24) .....	\$	53,735.19	25
26. TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS THIS PERIOD (from Line 22) .....	\$	19,947.60	26
27. CASH ON HAND AT CLOSE OF THE REPORTING PERIOD (subtract Line 26 from 25) .....	\$	33,787.59	27

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 1 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

Any information copied from such Reports and Statements may not be sold or used for the purpose of soliciting contributions or for commercial purposes, other than using the name and address of any political committee to solicit contributions from such committee.

DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

E. A. Stenberg  
100 Green Garden Drive  
Madison NE 68748

EMP:  
OOC: Retired

Primary 04-25-95 300.00  
06-28-95 100.00

YTD: \$ 400.00

C. B. Batchelder  
1201 South 16th Street  
Omaha NE 68108

EMP:  
OOC: Retired

Primary 05-10-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Jeanne Baumert  
1009 Howard Street  
Scribner NE 68507

EMP: Scribner Grain & Lumber  
OOC: Elevator Manager

Primary 04-06-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Charles Peterson  
HC 69 Box 114  
Atkinson NE 68713

EMP:  
OOC: Self Employed

Primary 05-09-95 100.00  
06-28-95 100.00

YTD: \$ 200.00

Bob Bennie  
1627 Old Glory Road  
Lincoln NE 68521

EMP: Edward D. Jones & Co.  
OOC: Investment Manager

Primary 06-29-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Robert Anderson  
1111 Lincoln Mall  
Lincoln NE 68508

EMP: Anderson Management Svc.  
OOC: President

Primary 06-29-95 200.00

YTD: \$ 200.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)



SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 2 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

Richard Abramson  
1544 Skyline Drive  
Elkhorn NE 68022

EMP: Prairie Systems  
OOC: President

Primary 05-10-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Michael Jensen  
Box 500  
Blair NE 68008

EMP: Great Plains  
OOC: President

Primary 06-16-95 250.00  
06-28-95 250.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Archibald Weaver  
Box 569  
Falls City NE 68355

EMP: Weaver & Merz  
OOC: Attorney

Primary 04-28-95 300.00  
06-28-95 200.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Jack Vetter  
12614 Sky Park Drive  
Omaha NE 68137

EMP: Vetter Health Services  
OOC: President

Primary 05-10-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Joe Knievel  
Rt. 1 Box 95  
Neligh NE 68756

EMP: Knievel's Inc.  
OOC: CEO

Primary 05-25-95 200.00

YTD: \$ 200.00

Fred Bosselman  
2717 Cottonwood Drive  
Grand Island NE 68801

EMP: Bosselmans's Truck Stops  
OOC: Owner

Primary 06-08-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 3 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

Glenn LeDioyt  
1311 South 91st Avenue  
Omaha NE 68124  
EMP: Retired  
Primary 06-08-95 250.00

YTD: \$ 250.00

Sheri Idelman  
3070 South 99th Avenue  
Omaha NE 68124  
EMP: Homemaker  
Primary 04-06-95 250.00

YTD: \$ 250.00

Steven Idelman  
3070 South 99th Avenue  
Omaha NE 68124  
EMP: Idelman Telemarketing  
President  
Primary 06-26-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Rufus Amis  
6441 Irvington Road  
Omaha NE 68134  
EMP: R.T.A. Company  
President  
Primary 06-16-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

John Brouillette  
Route 3, Box 85D  
Blair NE 68008  
EMP: Thousand Adventures  
Supervisor  
Primary 06-28-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

John Bookout  
9867 Devonshire Drive  
Omaha NE 68114  
EMP: Woodman of the World  
Executive  
Primary 05-23-95 250.00

YTD: \$ 250.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 4 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

John Binning  
1512 Skyline Drive  
Lincoln NE 68506  
EMP: Self  
OOC: Attorney  
Primary 04-28-95 500.00  
YTD: \$ 500.00

Alice Licht  
Box 30247  
Lincoln NE 68503  
EMP: Anderson Management  
OOC: Vice President  
Primary 06-29-95 200.00  
YTD: \$ 200.00

Leif Vopnford  
Route 1  
Fort Calhoun NE 68025  
EMP:  
OOC: Student  
Primary 06-28-95 1000.00  
YTD: \$ 1000.00

Neil Young  
212 West 19th Street  
Cozad NE 69130  
EMP: Cozad Telephone Company  
OOC: Manager  
Primary 06-08-95 1000.00  
YTD: \$ 1000.00

Mike Whealy  
659 J.E. George Blvd.  
Omaha NE 68132  
EMP: First Data Resources  
OOC: Attorney  
Primary 06-08-95 500.00  
YTD: \$ 500.00

William Bauer  
1117 Piedmont Road  
Lincoln NE 68510  
EMP:  
OOC: Retired  
Primary 06-29-95 200.00  
YTD: \$ 200.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 5 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

William Morrow  
One Merrill Lynch Plaza  
Omaha NE 68114

EMP: Erickson & Sederstrom  
OOC: Attorney

Primary 06-13-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Talton Anderson  
677 North 56th Street  
Omaha NE 68132

EMP: Baxter Chrysler Plymouth  
OOC: President

Primary 06-29-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Sam Grimminger  
716 South Stuhr Road  
Grand Island NE 68801

EMP: Hawk Enterprises  
OOC: President

Primary 06-29-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Sam Saad, Jr.  
401 North 114th Street  
Omaha NE 68154

EMP: Sam Saad and Associates  
OOC: President

Primary 06-26-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

James Moore  
4540 North 216th Street  
Elkhorn NE 68022

EMP: Mega Corporation  
OOC: President

Primary 06-16-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

James Hebenstreit  
1016 West 58th Street  
Kansas City MO 64113

EMP: Bartlett and Company  
OOC: Executive

Primary 04-07-95 500.00

06-30-95 300.00

06-06-95 192.75

IN-KIND (Catering)

YTD: \$ 992.75

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 6 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

Dan Karmazin  
1500 North 43rd Street  
Norfolk NE 68701

EMP: Self-employed  
OOC: Dentist

Primary 06-08-95 200.00

YTD: \$ 200.00

Dan Bolen  
6105 High Drive  
Mission Hills KS 66208

EMP: Commerce Bancshares  
OOC: Senior Vice Pres.

Primary 06-08-95 200.00

YTD: \$ 200.00

Ron Lockard  
815 "K" Street  
Lincoln NE 68508

EMP: T.M.I.  
OOC: Owner

Primary 06-08-95 250.00

YTD: \$ 250.00

Anne Stuart Batchelder  
6875 State Street  
Omaha NE 68152

EMP:  
OOC: Retired

Primary 05-10-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Jane Bunt  
680 Hillcrest Drive  
Blair NE 68008

EMP: Huntel Communications  
OOC: Executive

Primary 06-16-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Lynn Vopnford  
P.O. Box 45  
Blair NE 68008

EMP: Thousand Adventures  
OOC: Sales, Payroll

Primary 06-28-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 7 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

Kenneth Morrison

P.O. Box 609

Hastings

NE

68901

EMP: Morrison Enterprises

OOC: President

Primary 05-16-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Kenneth Vopnford

P.O. Box 45

Blair

NE

68008

EMP: Thousand Adventures

OOC: Vice President

Primary 06-28-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Tony Raimondo

1657 West Calle Colombo

Columbus

NE

68601

EMP: Behlen Manufacturing

OOC: President

Primary 06-29-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Barbara Vopnford, Sr.

Box 471

Blair

NE

68008

EMP: Thousand Adventures, Inc.

OOC: Owner

Primary 04-06-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Chris Vopnford

P.O. Box 301

Blair

NE

68008

EMP: Thousand Adventures

OOC: Sales

Primary 06-28-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Carolyn Hoegemeyer

Rural Route 2, Box 127

Hooper

NE

68031

EMP: Hoegemeyer Hybrids, Inc.

OOC: C.E.O.

Primary 04-07-95 250.00  
06-28-95 250.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 8 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

Barry Fanders  
104 South 90th Street  
Omaha NE 68114

EMP: Univ. NE Medical Center  
OOC: Physician

Primary 06-29-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Gary Blinn  
2605 Maple Street  
Norfolk NE 68701

EMP: Self-employed  
OOC: Beer Wholesaler

Primary 05-01-95 250.00

YTD: \$ 250.00

Joseph Pfeister  
2800 Woodmen Tower  
Omaha NE 68102

EMP: Pfeister & Associates  
OOC: Executive

Primary 05-02-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

\*Refunded Contribution

Russell Brehm  
1300 "P" Street  
Lincoln NE 68508

EMP: Douglas Theatre Co.  
OOC: Owner

Primary 04-18-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

Kathie Brouillette  
Rt. 3, Box 85D  
Blair NE 68008

EMP: Thousand Adventures, Inc.  
OOC: Executive

Primary 06-28-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Betty Jones  
16310 "L" Street  
Omaha NE 68135

EMP: The Cancer Center  
OOC: Assistant

Primary 06-30-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 9 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

Doug Steenblock  
Route 3, Box 186V  
Fremont NE 68025

EMP: Self-employed  
OOC: Contractor

Primary 04-06-95 500.00  
06-28-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Douglas Jones  
16310 "L" Street  
Omaha NE 68135

EMP: The Cancer Center  
OOC: Medical Doctor

Primary 06-30-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Paul Bartlett, Jr.  
4800 Main Street  
Kansas City MO 64112

EMP: Bartlett Grain and Co.  
OOC: President

Primary 06-30-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

Paul DeBruce  
5816 North Norton  
Gladstone MO 64119

EMP: DeBruce Grain, Inc.  
OOC: President

Primary 06-26-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

David Vopnford, Sr.  
Box 471  
Blair NE 68008

EMP: Thousand Adventures  
OOC: Owner-CEO

Primary 04-06-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

David Samson  
1790 Nebraska Street  
Blair NE 68008

EMP: Thousand Adventures  
OOC: Constructor

Primary 06-28-95 500.00

YTD: \$ 500.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)



SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Individuals

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 10 of 10  
LINE #:11(a)(i)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE                      FEC#: C00301549  
-----

Royce                      Harper                      EMP: State of Nebraska  
4000 South 56th Street                      OOC: Attorney  
Lincoln                      NE                      68506  
Primary 05-01-95                      100.00  
06-30-95                      100.00

YTD: \$                      200.00

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TOTAL This Period (last page this line number)-----> \$ 35242.75

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from Other Political Committees

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 1 of 01  
LINE #:11(c)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

Comm. to Elect Carl Hawkinson  
1577 North Prairie Street  
Galesburg IL 61401

Primary 06-28-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

(Permissible Funds)

E and S Political Committee  
10330 Regency Parkway Drive  
Omaha NE 68114

Primary 06-16-95 1000.00

YTD: \$ 1000.00

TOTAL This Period (last page this line number)-----> \$ 2000.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A  
Contributions from the Candidate

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 1 of 1  
LINE #:11(d)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

-----  
Don Stenberg  
6107 South 25th Street  
Lincoln NE 68521

EMP: State of Nebraska  
OOC: Attorney General

Primary 06-30-95 1552.44

YTD: \$ 1552.44

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TOTAL This Period (last page this line number)-----> \$ 1552.44

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

SCHEDULE A

ITEMIZED RECEIPTS

PAGE 1 of 01

Loans Made or Guaranteed by the Candidate

LINE #:13(a)

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DON STENBERG FOR U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE

FEC#: C00301549

-----  
Don Stenberg  
6701 South 25th Street  
Lincoln NE 68521

EMP: State of Nebraska  
OOC: Attorney General

Primary 03-01-95 \$5000.00  
(Personal Funds)

YTD: \$ 5000.00

=====

TOTAL This Period (last page this line number)-----> \$ 5000.00

SUBTOTAL OF RECEIPTS THIS PAGE-----> (OPTIONAL)

OMAHA WORLD-HERALD Monday, September 7, 1998

17

# Nebraska Opted Against Fraud Suit

BY ROBYNN TYSVER  
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Lincoln — As other states rushed to file consumer fraud lawsuits against Thousand Adventures Inc., Nebraska Attorney General Don Stenberg's office chose instead to mediate disputes between campers and the company.

His opponent, Democrat Pat Knapp of Lincoln, wants to know whether the \$15,000 donated to Stenberg from 1993 to 1995 by the company's owners and employees — including a 12-year-old boy — contributed to Nebraska's lack of legal action.

"His consumer-fraud division is a consumer fraud," Knapp said.

Stenberg, who is seeking a third term in November, countered that Knapp's "negative campaign of personal attacks" is an attempt to divert voters' attention from the issues. He said his office never saw a reason to file a lawsuit against the former Blair, Neb.-based company.

"The conduct of the campgrounds may be different in different states," Stenberg said. "We never had a case

that my staff felt would support the filing of a lawsuit."

Thousand Adventures left a trail of disgruntled campers and creditors in its wake when it was forced into bankruptcy in 1997. About 70,000 campers signed up as members at a cost of about \$6,000 each to gain access to the company's 58 campgrounds.

Things went from bad to worse as the company failed to maintain or keep some campgrounds open, prompting several states to file consumer fraud lawsuits and shut down the company's ability to sell memberships.

David Vopnford, the former owner of Thousand Adventures, is a conservative Republican interested in state races. He, six other family members and three company employees donated a total of \$14,900 during Stenberg's re-election bid in 1994 and his failed Senate bid in 1995.

They also allowed Stenberg to use their family airplane in 1994.

The family members often gave \$1,000 — the maximum allowed under federal election laws. Vopnford's grandson, Leif Vopnford of Blair, was

about 12 when he gave Stenberg \$1,000 on June 28, 1995.

Minors are allowed to contribute to campaigns as long as they understand what they are doing and as long as the money was not given to them for that purpose, said Ian Sturton, a spokesman for the Federal Election Commission in Washington.

Stenberg said he was not aware that he had such a young fan. "You don't always meet your contributors," he said.

He also said he never intervened on behalf of Vopnford with his office's consumer-fraud division and, although Nebraska never filed a suit, it did collect \$73,000 from the company for 33 disgruntled campers.

In contrast, Iowa filed a consumer fraud complaint against Thousand Adventures and won an out-of-court settlement in which the company promised to release its members from further contract obligations.

Doug Napier of Fort Madison, Iowa, wishes Nebraska would have followed Iowa, Ohio, New York, North Carolina and Kansas' lead in filing lawsuits. Na-

pier is the attorney in charge of a class-action suit on behalf of Thousand Adventures' 70,000 members.

"If the Nebraska Attorney General's Office had investigated and closed down the Nebraska home office, it would have had the ripple effect of providing protection to people throughout the United States," Napier said.

Gretchen Pettit of Lincoln also wishes that Nebraska had filed suit. She recently filed a complaint with the Stenberg's consumer-fraud division. She wants it to do something about the bill collectors trying to force her to make payments on her campground contract even though Thousand Adventures — the company she signed with — is in bankruptcy court.

Stenberg's office mailed her complaint to Travel America, the company that now operates or owns about 20 of Thousand Adventures' 58 campgrounds. The consumer-fraud division then mailed Travel America's answer back to Pettit.

Pettit wasn't happy. "We deserve some legal representation from our state officials," she said.

# Camper's Pinched in Property Shuffle

Creditors are trying to collect a campground company's debts from consumers unaware of its bankruptcy 4/7/78

BY ROBYNN TYSVER  
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Lincoln — Thousand Adventures Inc. is dead.

The former Nebraska campground company that sported Lear jets and courted politicians now exists only in bankruptcy court after years of battling creditors and consumer-fraud lawsuits. But the company that ended up with Thousand Adventures' property is ac-

cused of trying to collect money from campers who had signed contracts with the defunct company.

Doug Napier, the Fort Madison, Iowa, attorney who filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of Thousand Adventures' 70,000 members, says the collection effort being reported across the nation is an attempt to take advantage of senior citizens and would-be retirees who dreamed of cruising from campground to campground in their RVs.

He said these campers are under no obligation to continue with the new, smaller company, Travel America Inc., unless they want too. "But it's never made clear to them that it's a new offer," he said.

Meantime, campers who bought memberships to 58 campgrounds now

Nebraska opted against a consumer-fraud lawsuit after a Blair, Neb., campground company's bankruptcy caused grief for some campers. Page 17.

are left with 20 campgrounds — more if they want to pay added fees — and no assurances that those will continue to exist.

Napier and the lawyer for the Thousand Adventures bankruptcy trustee in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Dan Childers, believe it's only a matter of time before all the former Thousand Adventure campgrounds revert back to the bankruptcy court and are sold to pay creditors. Childers has filed suit to try to make that happen.

An attorney for Travel America, Michael Mallaney of Des Moines, denied

that Travel America obtained the campgrounds in violation of bankruptcy laws.

He said the transfers were made by Thousand Adventures subsidiaries in individual states to Travel America in exchange for assuming any debt on the properties.

He said the idea behind the property transfers was to keep the campgrounds open for the campers. At least one judge in Ohio has approved the transfer, he said.

Mallaney also said Travel America was not collecting on Thousand Adventure contracts but, as campground operator, was collecting membership fees.

"As I understand it," he said, "if former members of any of these subsidar-

ies want to use the Travel America camp system, those systems are available in exchange for what is called a membership fee."

A number of companies bought Thousand Adventure campgrounds for as little as \$1 or the cost of property taxes owed after the Blair, Neb., company was forced into bankruptcy last year, Childers said.

Gretchen Pettit is one of the unhappy campers who was unaware of the bankruptcy case.

"We were led to believe that Thousand Adventures just changed its name," she said.

The Lincoln woman said she fielded a telephone call this spring from a

See CAMPGROUNDS Page 17

## CAMP GROUNDS

# Bankruptcy Fiasco Comes at Expense Of Campers

Continued from Page 15

salesman named Bill Jones of Weeping Water, Neb. The 64-year-old said that Jones demanded that she and her husband, Ivan, continue to make their \$70 monthly payments.

Pettit is worried that Thornhaven, her favorite campground in Weeping Water, won't be open for long.

"He was very rude. He threatened me," Pettit said. "He said, 'We know where you live. Don't be late with your payments.'"

Thousand Adventures wasn't always Pettit's nightmare. The company had a hopeful beginning in 1982 when David Vopnford of Blair decided to capitalize on the RV craze by selling memberships to a group of campgrounds in 21 states.

For about \$6,000, campers would have access to 58 campgrounds.

Childers said it appeared that Vopnford started the company in good faith but was consumed by debt. His one mistake, Childers believes, was a penchant for luxury.

"The money spent on yachts and Lear jets, that was very imprudent to say the least," Childers said.

Vopnford's high style included two Lear jets and a \$600,000 yacht, which is now the focus of a search by a lawyer hired by the bankruptcy trustee.

A Republican, Vopnford also was known to contribute heavily to GOP candidates.

Vopnford now is believed to be managing a Mississippi campground. He did not have a listed phone number in Picayune, the town where he was believed to be living last.

The good times began to come apart when Vopnford failed to secure a loan to keep the business going, said John O'Hanlon, his former Blair attorney.

For several years in the mid-1990s, consumer-fraud divisions in 21 states battled with Thousand Adventures, forcing the closure of campgrounds, forbidding the company from selling

additional memberships and winning monetary settlements, said Ben Bellus, assistant attorney general in Iowa.

In 1997, the company was forced into bankruptcy. The campgrounds were then moved into Travel America, of which the exact ownership remains unknown, Childers said.

Because of the property transfers, Thousand Adventures was then able to claim only \$1,600 in assets and \$70 million in debt in bankruptcy court.

Childers believes the transfers were orchestrated by Vopnford's creditors. "It would appear Mr. Vopnford didn't get anything personal out of these transfers," Childers said.

The idea behind the property shuffle was to keep the campgrounds open as long as possible and out of the hands of the bankruptcy court in order to allow creditors to collect from campers, said Napier, the attorney for the class action suit.

He said Travel America knows it's only a matter of time before the campfires are extinguished permanently at the 20 remaining TAI campgrounds. "I still believe that's their plan," Napier said. "They haven't been putting money back into the campgrounds."

Maloney, Travel America's lawyer, said: "I think that's Mr. Napier's allegation and I think Travel America would deny that." Ray Novelli, president of Travel America in Irvine, Calif., could not be reached for comment.

Childers said there is testimony to support Napier's claim. He said two men — including David Vopnford — have testified that the purpose of Travel America was to make sure the creditors could continue to collect from

campers.

The bankruptcy trustee would like to inform campers about the bankruptcy proceedings but can't because it doesn't have a membership list, Childers said.

Travel America has refused the trustee's request for a list of members, prompting the trustee to go to court to try to force the company to release the list, he said.

Meantime, creditors — whom Travel America also has refused to identify — continue to collect from campers, he said.

One creditor has hired Resort Marketing Inc. of Weeping Water to collect on the contracts. The company is owned by David Vopnford's son and daughter-in-law, Ken and Lynn Vopnford.

Lynn Vopnford said she and her husband are not involved with Travel America and are working only as contractors. She said she did not remember the creditor's name.

The creditor believes that although Thousand Adventures is bankrupt, the customers still have a membership with Travel America, Lynn Vopnford said.

"They're owed that money," she said.

"These members still have a contract." But several states, including Iowa, New York and Kansas, have been aggressive in pursuing consumer complaints and have ordered that such collections stop.

In Iowa, for example, neither Travel America nor the creditors can collect unless customers willingly and knowingly agree to transfer their membership to Travel America as a result of a settlement with the state's consumer-fraud division, said Bellus, the assistant

attorney general in Iowa.

Bellus said this fall he learned about a letter sent from "T.A.I. Collections" of Weeping Water to an Iowa camper. The letter informed a couple that unless they paid on their Travel America contract, their Thousand Adventure account would become "due and payable."

Many people respond to such tactics because they fear that if they don't pay to Travel America, their credit will be ruined, Bellus said.

Bellus said he quickly wrote a letter to Travel America and to Resort Marketing, ordering them to stop collection efforts.

"We are very well aware of Travel America and we are watching them," he said.

Lynn Vopnford said she did not know of any such letter sent by the Weeping Water office. She also did not know that the company was not allowed to collect in Iowa and said she had not seen Bellus' letter.

Vopnford said the whole misadventure with the campground has been difficult for her family.

"We're trying to start over again," she said. "We lost a lot just like other people lost a lot. The hardest thing is everybody associates our last name with Thousand Adventures. You say your last name sometimes to people and they cringe. It's very, very tough."

*Adventures*  
**Thousand Acres, Inc.**

ATTACHMENT B

**A Sample of the Litigation Brought by Attorneys General Around the Country**

**Iowa** -- The Iowa Attorney General filed a consumer fraud lawsuit in 1996 against Thousand Adventures, Inc., a Nebraska-based company operating membership campgrounds across the country. The Iowa AG's lawsuit alleged that TAI made false and deceptive statements about the value of memberships and about consumers' ability to obtain refunds or sell their memberships. Under a consent judgment filed August 1, 1997, in Polk County District Court in Des Moines, TAI is required to resolve numerous complaints and alleged violations of the consumer fraud act. Also under the judgment, TAI will pay more than \$50,000 in penalties and costs of investigation, and for consumer education.

The consent judgment does not resolve a private class action being pursued on behalf of campground members by Douglas Napier, an attorney in Ft. Madison, Iowa.

**Kansas** -- The Kansas Attorney General filed a consumer fraud lawsuit in January 1996 against TAI alleging deceptive sales acts. The Court issued an order restraining TAI from collecting or attempting to collect on installment contracts.

**New York** -- The New York Attorney General filed suit against TAI because TAI continued to operate after it had been condemned. A court order prohibited the sale of memberships and ordered refunds to thousands of families that bought memberships. The order also barred TAI from doing business in New York. The New York Attorney General reported he was sending information to Attorneys General in other states where TAI does business.

**North Carolina** -- The North Carolina Attorney General successfully brought suit against TAI for consumer fraud, winning a judgment against TAI for \$75,000 plus \$10,000 fees and other remedies.

**BACKGROUND ON TAI**

TAI is a Nebraska corporation headquartered in Blair, Nebraska; the company is owned by David Vopnford and his wife Barbara.



Iowa Attorney  
General

ATTACHMENT C

## News Release

Contact Bob Brammer  
Phone: 515-281-6699  
Fax: 515-281-4209

For immediate release - Friday, August 1, 1997.

### Miller: Consumer Fraud Lawsuit Against Campground Company Resolved

Thousand Adventures operates membership campgrounds near Marshalltown, Knoxville, Osceola, and Lake Rathbun

DES MOINES. Attorney General Tom Miller said Friday that his office has resolved a consumer fraud lawsuit brought against Thousand Adventures, Inc., a Nebraska-based company that operates four membership campgrounds in Iowa near Marshalltown, Knoxville, Osceola, and Lake Rathbun.

Miller's lawsuit had alleged that Thousand Adventures made false and deceptive statements about the value of memberships -- which typically cost consumers from \$3,000 to \$6,000 -- and about consumers' ability to obtain refunds or sell their memberships.

"The campgrounds will remain open, and that's good," Miller said. "The company will change numerous practices that violated Iowa's consumer fraud act, and it will pay the State over \$50,000 in penalties and costs of investigation, and for consumer education."

Miller said a formal consent judgment was filed Friday morning in Polk County District Court in Des Moines. Under the agreement, Thousand Adventures is under court order to resolve numerous complaints and alleged violations of the consumer fraud act:

- Cancellation. Thousand Adventures must immediately cancel memberships and release persons from further liability if they requested cancellation. The company had denied such requests and continued to bill members. The company also is obligated to make timely payments to customers who had re-sale agreements, and to catch up on any past-due payments to customers.
- Changing terms in contracts. Thousand Adventures is prohibited from unilaterally changing any material terms in membership contracts. Iowans had complained that the company had imposed unexpected, additional charges to members.
- Debt collection practices. Thousand Adventures must avoid illegal debt collection practices and correct unfavorable credit reports the company had generated with credit reporting agencies.
- Consumer complaints. Existing and future consumer complaints must be resolved within 30 days.
- Campground maintenance. All facilities must be maintained in good and safe working order.
- Misrepresentations. The company is prohibited from misrepresentations. Miller's suit had alleged that the company touted new campground facilities that did not exist, and misrepresented the quality or odds of receiving particular gifts or prizes that were used as inducements for people to visit the campgrounds and listen to sales pitches.

The consent judgment also includes an enforcement "hammer," Miller said. The Court retains jurisdiction, and, if the company violates the terms of the agreement, it can be ordered to stop all business in Iowa, pay \$200,000 to the State, and release customers from their contracts.

The consent judgment does not resolve a private class action that is being pursued on behalf of campground members by Douglas Napier, an attorney in Ft. Madison.